

## [Charles Smith]

W15019

1 Conn. 1938-9 Smith

Charles Smith:

"I found somethin' the other day that you oughta be interested in. Been savin' it for you. You're still writin' that knife company history ain't you? Well, this here gives the complete history of industry at the Bridge. From away back. I don't know what paper it's out of. Come in the house a minute, and I'll find it for you. Sit down. I put it here in the cupboard somewhere. Yes, here it is:"

'the destruction by fire of the knife shop at Terry's bridge removed one of the outstanding landmarks of this section, and one which, although it served chiefly as a landmark alone in its latter years had a rich historical background.

'Following its destruction, this spot was left without a mill or factory of some kind for the first time since early in the eighteenth century, when John Sutliff, or Sutcliffe, built and conducted a grist mill there. A part of this old mill actually remained standing near the dam until a few years ago. This mill was built about 1730.

"In 1810, Eli Terry, famous clock maker, bought a site on the falls and built a clock factory, having sold out his interest in the firm of Terry, Hoadley and Thomas. He was one of the most inventive of the early clock makers, perfecting a thirty hour wood movement of radical design, and which was such an improvement on the movements made at the time that it eventually preceded the others generally.

'He was also noted for his designs of cases. His shelf clock, with the beautiful pillar and scroll design, was the first of the medium sized clocks, and being produced at a more

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popular price than the tall grandfather clocks then in vogue, not with a sale that was unprecedented in clock manufacturing history.

'When he proposed to put out 200 clocks a year, he was called a fool by other clock makers. But he succeeded in his plan and marketed the entire output. The figure seems small in this day of vast production but was revolutionary output for 2 his time.

'Perhaps no clock model is more sought after today by antique buyers than the Eli Terry pillar and scroll shelf clock. This clock he put into homes all over the country whose owners had never before even so much as thought of owning a clock.

'Eli Terry enlarges his plant from time to time, selling out to his son, Eli Jr., in 1828. Eli Jr., however, was not the clock man his father was, and became interested in other pursuits. In 1840, he converted the clock factory into a woolen mill. The original Sutcliffe grist mill, was taken over by him and used as a dye shop.

'the knife shop was built in the early sixties and was used at first in connection with the woolen business. The first floor was used as a machine room, and the second as a drying room.

'this building had an in and out career as a successful business location. One time when no business was being carried on there it was put into service as a social center. Lectures and dances were given there.

'When knives were made at Terry's bridge they were of fine quality, for the men there knew their trade well. The modern system of marketing, calling for tremendous orders at extremely low rates, brought about a condition which the local concern, and other such small knife manufacturers could not buck. There are very few such little independent knife companies left in New England today."

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Mr. Smith: "You can have that clippin'. Emma was cleanin' out a desk the other day and she found it, and a lot of other junk. She was going to throw it away, and I thought about you and I saved it.

"Seems to me there was some stuff around here about the old knife shop, too, the one down in the village. If I find it, I'll save it for you."